

Department of Defense Office of Inspector General

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March 6, 2007

DoD Involvement with The Rendon Group

Executive Summary

Who Should Read This Report and Why? DoD officials contracting with public relations firms and those interested in the work of The Rendon Group in the months leading up to and during the Iraq war should read this report.

Background. The Rendon Group is a public relations firm that provides strategic communications planning, media analysis, a news monitoring service, public relations training, and crisis management. In the past few years, numerous news articles were printed about DoD contracting with public relations firms to work on behalf of the DoD in the months leading up to and during the Iraq war. Some articles alleged The Rendon Group's participation in activities such as psychological operations. In a December 6, 2005, letter to the DoD Inspector General, Congressman Walter Jones requested a review of The Rendon Group and its role in the months leading up to the Iraq War. Congressman Jones requested that we review elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense to determine whether the DoD hired The Rendon Group to deliberately create conditions that would convince the American people and Congress that Iraq was an imminent threat.

Results. We did not find evidence that the DoD hired The Rendon Group to deliberately create conditions that would convince the American people and Congress that Iraq was an imminent threat. We examined the activities that The Rendon Group conducted under 46 different DoD work orders and did not find examples of any activities that did not comply with DoD policy and legal requirements.

In the letter to the Inspector General, Congressman Jones asked 24 specific questions about the DoD involvement with The Rendon Group. As part of our review, we attempted to obtain answers to questions, which focused on why the Office of the Secretary of Defense hired The Rendon Group; what work it completed for DoD; whether it had access to classified information or any involvement with the Office of Strategic Influence; what work it completed regarding the referendum in Vieques, Puerto Rico; and the Iraqi National Congress. The questions also included concerns about the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Management Comments. We provided a draft of this report on February 16, 2007. No written response to this report was required, and none was received. Therefore, we are publishing this report in final form.